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Signal Hill Municipal Code

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Chapter 13.10

WATER CONSERVATION IN LANDSCAPING

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13.10.010 Purpose.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish standards and procedures for the design, installation and management of water-conserving landscapes in order to utilize available plant, water and land resources to avoid excessive landscape water demands while ensuring high quality landscape design. (Ord. 93-01-1145 § 1 (part))

13.10.020 Applicability.

A. These requirements shall be applicable to new landscaping for industrial, commercial, office and institutional developments; to parks and other public recreational areas; to multifamily (five or more units) residential areas; to model home complexes; and to city road medians and corridors.

B. These requirements shall not be applicable to:

1. Homeowner provided landscaping at single-family and multiple-family projects;
2. Cemeteries;
3. Registered historical sites;
4. Ecological restoration projects that do not require a permanent irrigation system;
5. Any project with a landscape area less than one thousand square feet, unless the director determines that substantial compliance with the purpose of this chapter as stated in subsection A of this section requires that a landscape plan be submitted.

C. Exemptions. The director may authorize exemptions to any of the design and improvement standards in this chapter. Such exemptions may be granted if the director finds that the proposed design or improvement is in substantial compliance with the purpose and intent of this chapter. (Ord. 93-01-1145 § 1 (part))

13.10.030 Definitions.

Unless the context specifically indicates otherwise, the meaning of terms used in this chapter shall be as defined in this section:

"Application rate" means the rate of irrigation (inches/hour or gallons per minute) at which water is applied by an irrigation system.

"Automatic control valve" means a valve in an irrigation system which is activated by an automatic electric or hydraulic controller.

"Automatic irrigation system" means an irrigation system that can be controlled without manual manipulation and which operates on a preset program.

"Contour" means a line drawn on a plan which connects all points of equal elevation above or below a known or assumed reference point.

"Controller" means an automatic timing device with enclosure, which signals automatic valves to open and close on a preset program.

"Cycle" means, in irrigation, the complete operation of a controller station.

"Designer" means a person qualified to practice landscape architecture and/or irrigation design.

"Director" means the director of planning and community development of the city.

"Grading" means earthwork performed to alter the natural contours of an area to be planted.

"Hydrozone" means a portion of the planting area having plants grouped according to water need.

"Infiltration rate" means the rate (inches per hour) in which water moves through soil under natural conditions.

"Irrigation system" means a complete connection of system components, including the water distribution network and the necessary irrigation equipment and downstream from the backflow prevention device.

"Planting area" means the parcel area less building pad(s), driveway(s), patio(s), deck(s), walkway(s) and parking area(s). Planting area includes water bodies (i.e., fountains, ponds, lakes) and natural areas.

"Planting plan" means a plan which shall identify location, spacing, numbers, container sizes of all plant materials including common and botanical names.

"Rehabilitated landscape" means any planting area in which fifty percent of existing landscape materials are replaced or modified within any twelve-month period. Examples include a change of plants or groundcover, installation of a new irrigation system, and grading modifications.

"Station" means a position on an automatic irrigation controller which indicates the control point of automatic irrigation valves.

"Turf" means a surface layer of earth containing grass with its roots. (Ord. 93-01-1145 § 1 (part))

13.10.040 Landscape plan--Required.

Landscape plans shall be prepared in accordance with the standards set forth herein and with any guidelines developed to help implement the provisions of this chapter. Such plans shall be submitted and approved prior to the issuance of building permits to comply with the requirements of this chapter. (Ord. 93-01-1145 § 1 (part))

13.10.050 Landscape plan--Application.

Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a landscape plan application shall be submitted and reviewed in accordance with this chapter. Applications for landscape plan approval shall be filed by the owner of the affected property or his agent, or by a public entity to which the provisions of the chapter apply, on forms furnished by the director. (Ord. 93-01-1145 § 1 (part))

13.10.060 Landscape plan--Approval.

No landscape plan application shall be approved unless the director finds that the plan complements the design of the project, is consistent with the provisions of this chapter and applicable landscape guidelines; compatible with adjacent existing or future public landscaped areas, and with the elevations and appearances with existing structures located upon lots within the immediate vicinity of the lot which is the subject of such application. (Ord. 93-01-1145 § 1 (part))

13.10.070 Landscape plan--Content.

Each landscape plan shall consist of the following elements including, but not limited to the following:

A. **Water Conservation Concept Statement.** Each landscape plan shall include a cover sheet referred to as the water conservation concept statement, which serves as a checklist to verify that the elements of the landscape plan have been completed and includes a brief narrative summary of the project. The statement shall include calculations of the project's:

1. Maximum applied water allowance;
2. Estimated applied water use.

B. **Planting Plan.** The planting plan shall identify location, spacing, numbers and container sizes of all plant materials including common and botanical names, drawn on project base sheets in a clear and legible fashion in accordance with the guidelines established to implement the provisions of this chapter.

C. **Irrigation Plan.** The irrigation plan shall identify all

components of the irrigation system drawn on project base sheets in a clear and legible fashion in accordance with the guidelines established to implement the provisions of this chapter.

D. Annual Irrigation Schedule. The annual irrigation schedule shall be prepared, with a minimum four-season water schedule, for both the plant establishment period and established landscape. The irrigation schedule shall include run time and frequency of irrigation for each station. (Ord. 93-01-1145 § 1 (part))

13.10.080 Water features.

Decorative water features such as pools, ponds and waterfalls used in landscape areas shall incorporate recycling of water, and where available, use reclaimed water and shall be designed and operated to minimize water loss. (Ord. 93-01-1145 § 1 (part))

13.10.090 Water meters.

Each landscape irrigation system shall be metered for water use, separately from domestic and other nonlandscape uses. (Ord. 93-01-1145 § 1 (part))

13.10.100 Landscape maintenance.

The property owner shall permanently and continuously maintain all landscaping and irrigation in a neat, clean and healthy condition, including removal of litter, proper pruning, mowing of lawns, weeds, fertilizing, and watering; and replacement of diseased and/or dead plants and malfunctioning or missing irrigation system components. (Ord. 93-01-1145 § 1 (part))

13.10.110 Model home landscaping.

For each subdivision with model homes the developer shall submit a landscape plan and install landscaping for each model home, incorporating the requirements of this chapter and including:

A. Signs identifying elements of the water conserving landscape and irrigation system design placed around the model;

B. Literature describing water conserving landscapes to be available to individuals touring the model;

C. The location, text and size of signs shall be clearly shown on the landscape plan and shall be in substantial accordance with the guidelines established to implement the provisions of this chapter. (Ord. 93-01-1145 § 1 (part))

13.10.120 Landscape certificate.

Upon completion of the installation of the landscaping, the designer shall certify that the landscape complies with all requirements of this chapter. Certification shall be accomplished by completion of a landscape certificate on a form approved by the director. Failure to submit a complete and accurate landscape certificate will delay final approval of the project. (Ord. 93-01-1145 § 1 (part))

13.10.130 Relative water requirements of commonly used plants.

The director shall develop a list of plants that are commonly used in landscape designs with water requirement classifications of low, medium and high to assist landscape designers to choose species of appropriate water demands to comply with this chapter and to group species of similar water demands to facilitate efficient irrigation. This list shall be included in the landscape guidelines developed to implement the provisions of this chapter. (Ord. 93-01-1145 § 1 (part))

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